

Asset or Liability?

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The BNP national standing committee was scheduled to meet at 9:00 pm at the party chief's Gulshan office on April 9. Three standing committee members reached there much before the scheduled time. One of the members referred to some recent remarks made by BNP senior vice-chairman Tarique Rahman. In a frustrating and annoyed voice he questioned: "Why is all this happening?" Two other members could not reply. After some time, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia arrived and the meeting began where the present political situation was discussed.

Interestingly, none of the three members raised the issue at the meeting. Asked, a member told this correspondent that it was not possible to say anything criticising Tarique Rahman regardless of his activities. Considering the prevailing situation in the party, none of the party's senior leaders dare say anything which may go against Tarique, elder son of BNP chief Khaleda.

Like the three standing committee members, many BNP leaders think Tarique Rahman's recent remarks claiming that Gen Ziaur Rahman was the first president of Bangladesh and that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became prime minister "illegally" in 1972 have benefited the BNP's archrival Awami League and the government. His ridiculous remarks are nothing but distortion of historic facts. Yet, his mother BNP chief Khaleda Zia had supported her son's claim. One or two senior BNP leaders had attempted to explan how Ziaur Rahman was the first president to defend Khaleda and her son. But they were not very successful in it. "It is difficult to defend the